

Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 INR-09 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 PRS-01 L-02 RSR-01 RSC-01

(ADP) W

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P 110521 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY

CINCPAC CP SMITH HI

COMUSMACTHAI

COMUSSAG

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 4533

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PGOV, CB

SUBJ: POLITICAL COUNCIL DISPENSES WITH PRIME MINISTERSHIP

1. IN TAM AND CHENG HENG TOLD ME MAY 10 THAT THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCEL HAS DECIDED, AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF APPARENTLY FRUITLESS DISCUSSIONS, TO DISPENSE ALTOGETHER WITH THE POST OF PRIME MINISTER IN FAVOR OF AN ARRANGEMENT UNDER WHICH EACH OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WOULD ASSUME THE COORDINATION OF A PARTICULAR GROUP OF MINISTERS, WHO WOULD IN TURN BE HEADED BY TECHNOCRATS RATHER THAN POLITICIANS. THE COUNCIL IS MEETING AGAIN THIS MORNING, MAY 11, TO GIVE FLESH TO THIS NEW SKELETON AND TO ADDRESS THE DIFFICULT DECISION OF ALLOCATION OF FUNCTIONS AMONG THE FOUR. NEITHER CHENG HENG OR IN TAM HAD ANY CLEAR NOTION YESTERDAY WHO MIGHT HEAD THE ECONOMIC MINISTRIES NOR HOW DEFENSE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS MIGHT BE DISTRIBUTED.

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2. BOTH IN TAM AND CHENG HENG EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THIS CONCEPT, TO WHICH THEY SAID SIRIK MATAK HAD AGREED AND APPARENTLY ALSO MARSHAL LON NOL, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER WISHED TO CONSULT THE SOCIO- REPUBLICAN PARTY BEFORE GIVING IT HIS FINAL ENDORSEMENT.

3. I COMMENTED TO BOTH CHENG HENG AND IN TAM THAT THE PRESERVATION OF UNITY AMONG THE FOUR AND SPEEDY AGREEMENT BY THEM ON WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS THEY BELIEVE ARE POSSIBLE AND WORKABLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE OUR PRIMARY CONCERNS. IF THE NEW CONCEPT OF A TRUNCATED GOVERNMENT SEEMED TO THEM DESIRABLE, WE WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH IT. I POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THEY SHOULD CAREFULLY SELECT THE QTE EXECUTORS OF THEIR WILL UNQTE WHO WILL DIRECT THE MINISTRIES, PICKING THE VERY BEST TALENT AVAILABLE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO PARTY AFFILIATION.

4. COMMENT: THE PACE OF THESE CONSULTATIONS IS SLOW BY OUR STANDARDS BUT ABOUT PAR FOR THE KHMER. HOPEFULLY THE FOUR WILL NOW BE ABLE TO AGREE WITHOUT UNDUE DELAY ON THE ALLOCATION OF FUNCTIONS AMONG THEM.
SWANK

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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TAGS: PGOV, CB
To: BANGKOK
CINCPAC CP SMITH HI
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